

IN THE ABSTRACT

Please replace the abstract with the following abstract:

~~The present invention provides a~~ A method of temporarily protecting a surface which includes the steps of applying a continuous coating of a masking material to said surface, which masking material comprises, before drying, an aqueous solution or emulsion consisting essentially of a film-forming, carboxylic acid-containing polymer; coating all or a portion of said surface with a coating compound, said masking material preventing said coating compound from contacting said surface; and, thereafter, removing said masking material from said surface. Preferably said carboxylic acid-containing polymer is an acrylic or methacrylic acid-containing copolymer and is the sole film-forming component of the aqueous solution or emulsion.